

Charting the Charter

Equality bodies and fundamental rights in the EU

Equinet Seminar – *Draft Agenda*

VENUE	Crown Plaza Hotel, Rue Gineste 3, 1210 Brussels
DATE	16-17 June 2015

OBJECTIVES

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (the Charter) became binding primary EU legislation with the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. EU institutions in all their actions and Member States, when they are acting within the scope of EU law, have a legal obligation to ensure respect for fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter.

The Court of Justice of the EU as well as national courts in their case law refer increasingly often to the Charter, illustrating its growing importance. However, to date the use of the Charter by equality bodies at the domestic level remains limited.

This Equinet seminar is dedicated to the role and importance of the Charter in safeguarding fundamental rights, ensuring equality and combating discrimination and it will have a particular focus on the practical use and benefits of the Charter for equality bodies.

The seminar will feature presentations by eminent external speakers and experts of equality bodies as well as interactive workshop sessions.

This seminar is designed to enable equality bodies' staff to:

- Discuss the legal nature of the Charter, and its relevance for practitioners and in particular equality bodies,
- Familiarise with the content of the Charter,
- Learn about the Charter's applicability at national level and its links with other human rights instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights,
- Share their knowledge and experience during the sessions and during the breaks,
- Learn about good practice initiatives and projects by other equality bodies,
- Make better use of the Charter in their work at domestic level,
- Upon their return inform their colleagues about the lessons learned at the training

PARTICIPANTS

This Equinet seminar is dedicated to an audience of approximately 50 staff members of equality bodies with responsibilities in dealing with case work and legal strategy. The seminar programme is designed primarily for staff members with a **legal background**.



Tuesday, 16 June

09.00-09.30 **Opening address and presentation of the European Commission's work on the Charter** **Chiara Adamo**
Head of Unit, European Commission
DG Justice, Unit C1 – Fundamental Rights and Rights of the Child

09.30-09.45 **Welcome and opening by Equinet** **Evelyn Collins**
Chair of Equinet, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

09.45 – 10.00 **Exchange with Audience**

10.00 – 10.30 **Coffee Break**

Session 1 – Introducing the Charter

10.30-11.15 **Introducing the Charter** **Adam Bodnar**

- The legal nature of the Charter
- The Charter's place in the human rights protection system of the EU
- Why and how is the Charter relevant at the national level for equality bodies?
- CJEU case law on the scope of application of the Charter

University of Warsaw and Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland

11.15-11.30 **Questions and answers**

Session 2 – Workshop

11.30-12.15 **Discussing situations and cases where the Charter applies or might apply**

12.15-13.30 **Lunch**

Session 3 – The content of the Charter

13.30-14.10 **Structure and content of the Charter** **Katrin Wladasch**

- The structure of the Charter
- Chapters relevant for Equality Bodies and related case law
- Other provisions relevant for equality bodies and related case law

Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights

14.10-15.40 **Case study applying the Charter – in small groups**

15.40-16.00 **Coffee break**

16.00-16.30 **Panel debate with the moderators of the discussion groups**

Session 4 – The experience of NHRIs and NGOs

16.30-16.50 **Presentation of cases and other work using the Charter – the experience of an equality body and NHRI** **Clare Collier**
Equality and Human Rights Commission, Great Britain

16.50-17.10 **Presentation of cases from national and European level and other work using the Charter – the experience of an NGO** **Nuala Mole**
AIRE Centre

17.10-17.30 **Questions and answers**

19:30 **Dinner & Social Event**

Wednesday, 17 June

Session 5 – Links with other human rights instruments and national law

09.00-09.30 **The Charter's links with other human rights instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights** **Vincent Depaigne**
European Commission, DG Justice

- Links between the different instruments
- Possible effects of the EU's accession to the ECHR and the impact of the CJEU's opinion rejecting the draft accession agreement

09.30-10.00 **The Charter's links with national human rights law and its application at national level** **Mirosław Wroblewski**
Human Rights Defender Office, Poland

- Use of the Charter in cases at Member State level

10.00-10.15 **Questions and answers**

10.15-10.45 **Coffee break**

Session 6 – Awareness raising and other ways of using the Charter

10.45-11.15 **The work and experiences of the FRA** **Gabriel Toggenburg**
EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

- Awareness-raising, including the Charterpedia

11.15-11.45 **Using the Charter as a lever for change** **Paul van Sasse van Ysselt**
Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

- Use of the Charter in national policy-making

11.45-12.45 **Discussing the use of the Charter outside case work, including awareness-raising, policy-making and recommendations to policy-makers – in small groups**

12.45-13.00 **Closing – Anne Gaspard, Executive Director, Equinet**

13.00-14.00 **Closing Lunch**